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From Politics to Pope: An Account of the Group Aesthetic

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Article

Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery" and Holocaust Literature

Michael Robinson

Writing and Rhetoric Department, Harrington School of Communication and Media, College of Arts and Sciences, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI 02881, USA; merobi@gmail.com

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Abstract: Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery" has been notorious since its first publication in 1948, but rarely, if ever, has it been read in light of its immediate historical context. This essay draws on literature, philosophy, and anthropology from the period to argue that Jackson's story, which scholars have traditionally read through the lens of gender studies, invokes the themes of Holocaust literature. To support this argument, the essay explores imaginative Holocaust literature from the period by David Rousset, whose Holocaust memoir *The Other Kingdom* appeared in English translation in 1946, anthropological discourse from the period on scapegoating and European anti-Semitism, and critical discourse on the Holocaust and anti-Semitism from the period by Hannah Arendt and Theodor Adorno. The analysis finds that, in representing the phenomena of scapegoating and death selection in a small town in the US, Jackson's story belongs to an abstract discourse on Holocaust-related themes and topics that was actively produced at midcentury, as evidenced partly by Rousset's influential memoir. A master of the horror genre, Jackson could have drawn on her own experience of anti-Semitism, along with her known interest in the study of folklore, to contribute this chilling representation of the personal experience of death selection to a discourse on Holocaust-related themes. As this article shows, the abstract discourse Jackson's story joined is marked by skepticism about or disinterest in ethnic difference and anthropological concepts. Due to the fact that this article features comparative analysis of Holocaust literature, a sub-topic is the debate among scholars concerning the ethics of literary representation of the Shoah and of analysis of Holocaust memoir. Jackson's story and its context invoke perennially important questions about identity and representation in discourse about the Shoah and anti-Semitism.

Keywords: Jackson, Shirley (1916–1965); Rousset, David (1912–1997); Holocaust literature; scapegoating; anti-Semitism; women in literature

1. Introduction

26 June 2018, marked the 70th anniversary of the publication of one of the most notorious stories published in *The New Yorker*, Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery" (1948). In a matter-of-fact style, the story describes modern-day Americans performing the ritual stoning of a woman named Tessie Hutchinson. The community carries out the ritual with an air of tired routine, "speaking of planting and rain, tractors and taxes" while waiting for it to begin (Jackson 1948, p. 25). Once the ritual is underway, some in the town object on the basis that other villages have stopped performing their lotteries. An older man defends the practice with a saying that invokes the mythical logic of sacrifice: "Lottery in June, corn be heavy soon" (Jackson 1948, p. 27). Hence, the victim will evidently be an anachronism even in the world of the story itself—a pre-modern scapegoat stoned in view of a post office and a bank. At the end of the story, Tessie's neighbors, who have seemed uncomfortable with the rite while their own fates have been unclear, prepare enthusiastically for the violence.

Existing in dramatic tension with the setting and the broader world of the text (“‘Some places have already quit lotteries’, Mrs. Adams said” (Jackson 1948, p. 27)), the uncanniness of this violent rite has probably been the main source of the story’s power. In terms of the volume of letters received by *The New Yorker* about a story, the impact of “The Lottery” was unprecedented at the time (Franklin 2016). Some of these readers took it for a true story. Among them was a University of Cincinnati College of Medicine psychiatrist who wrote to Jackson, “I think your story is based on fact. Am I right? As a psychiatrist, I am fascinated by the psychodynamic possibilities suggested by this anachronistic ritual” (Franklin 2016, p. 231).

Jackson is best known as a writer of horror fiction, and at the core of this story’s horror is a detailed account of a death selection—the ostensibly random process of selecting Tessie as the scapegoat. The narrative describing the lottery resembles anthropological field notes in which a researcher records what unfolds, offering some context but expressing no judgments or emotional responses to the events. The horror builds in the tension between this unadorned style and the high drama of Tessie’s fruitless efforts to save herself in the face of her neighbors’ disregard for her life and their complicity in the process. One sees her initially carefree attitude transform into agitation as she realizes, first, that she might be the victim and, second, that she will be. As she resists, some of her own family members turn on her. Neither is she innocent: when the Hutchinson family is chosen in the first round, Tessie objects by calling for her daughter and son-in-law to be included in the second drawing (“Let *them* take their chance!” (Jackson 1948, p. 27)), only to be corrected by Mr. Summers (“Daughters draw with their husbands’ families, Tessie” (Jackson 1948, p. 27)). The process of selection exploits self-interest to sever the bonds of family and turn neighbors against one another.

“The Lottery” appeared in *The New Yorker* magazine three years after the surrender of Germany to the Western Allies, and the mechanism and details of the ritual invoke the type of brutal selection process often described in Holocaust memoir and histories of the Holocaust. The murder is not represented, making the death selection process central to the plot and placing the focus of the narrative on the personal experience of traumatic selection and separation. In being known but not witnessed, the murder haunts the text. The simultaneous presence and absence of trauma invoke another trope of Holocaust history: the denial of knowledge. In shifting direct focus from the stoning to the experience of separation and selection, the text also emphasizes what historians of the Holocaust have highlighted as one of its most horrific dimensions from the perspective of the individual victim. In their definitive history of Auschwitz, Debórah Dwork and Robert Jan Van Pelt conclude,

“Gas chambers, crematorium, however you call it.” Half a century later, Sara Grossman was not precise. What mattered was that the men were separated from the women, and the grandmother Feigle and the littler girl Mirka went to the left, and the adolescent Regina, and the two sisters-in-law Esther and Sara to the right. And she is correct. *That process of selection is the core and moral nadir of the horror of the Holocaust—the selection, not the gas chambers and crematoria.* The Germans and their allies had arrogated to themselves the power to decide who should live and who should die. “As though”, Hannah Arendt accused Eichmann, “you and your superiors had any right to determine who should and who should not inhabit the world.” (Dwork and Van Pelt 2008, p. 403, emphasis added)

Furthermore, as Ruth Franklin has noted in *Shirley Jackson: A Rather Haunted Life* (Franklin 2016), the story resonates with at least one account of the Nazi concentration camps—David Rousset’s *L’Univers concentrationnaire* (Rousset 1946), which appeared in English as *The Other Kingdom* in 1947. In the book, which has also appeared in English under the title *A World Apart*, Rousset takes an imaginative and literary approach to recounting his experiences. Notably, this once-influential account avoids mention of the Jewish genocide. Instead, Rousset takes a simultaneously personal and universalizing view, one that relates his experiences in Nazi camps to abstract questions about evil and human nature while largely eschewing overt discussion of the role of bigotry and racism in the Holocaust—of the Nazis’ projects of genocide and ethnic cleansing as such. Rousset’s memoir is not an isolated example of imaginative abstraction in survivors’ autobiographical accounts of the camps.

A review of a translation of the memoir that appeared in 1947 in *The New Yorker*, where Jackson's husband was a staff writer at the time, seems to approve of this imaginative abstraction from the specific genocidal practices of the Nazis. There, one reads that Rousset's book is

[a]n abstract and literary approach to the subject of Nazi concentration camps. M. Rousset, a member of the French underground who spent sixteen months in Buchenwald, Neuengamme, and similar establishments, is not particularly concerned with details and specific incidents of life at the camps; instead, he attempts to analyze the pathology of National Socialism. In many ways, this is the most terrifying and significant account yet printed of Nazi inhumanity, because it makes the most sense. The author understood exactly what was going on around him—the mystic need of the S. S. to satisfy an inborn contempt for mankind, and the masters' delight in setting up little bureaucracies among prisoners and then watching them beat and kill each other until human dignity no longer existed. "Normal men do not know that everything is possible", M. Rousset says in summation. "The concentrationees do know." (Anon 1947, p. 67)

The review notes approvingly that Rousset's perspective abstracts the account from concrete details to a plane of theoretical analysis employing psychological concepts. Furthermore, the result of this analysis is characterized in universal terms: the project is one of exploring the Nazis' contempt for "mankind" in general, not Jewish people or any other group in particular, and, similarly, registering the camps' degradation of "human" life. The review does not misrepresent Rousset's account, which this article discusses in detail below. Notably, this account of the camps avoids the subject of the Jewish genocide. This avoidance illustrates a more general pattern of abstraction from the Nazis' targeting of specific minorities including Jews that is perceivable discourse about the Holocaust at midcentury. One of the objectives of this article is to explore the thematic parallels between Jackson's story and this abstract discourse about the Holocaust exemplified by Rousset's contemporaneous memoir. Rousset's text appears to have been influential, shaping the way Hannah Arendt and Theodor Adorno wrote about the Holocaust, for example. In works referring to Rousset, these writers express skepticism about identity: Adorno questions its reality in a modernity fractured by trauma, and Arendt its practical value to an adequate response to the Holocaust.

This essay explores this cultural context in order to offer an original reading of Jackson's classic story. I argue that in representing the phenomena of scapegoating and death selection in a small town in the US, Jackson's story belongs to an abstract discourse on Holocaust-related themes that was being actively produced at the time of writing, as evidenced in part by Rousset's influential memoir. Making such a claim necessitates discussion of the Holocaust in terms of literature and analysis of a survivor's discourse, both of which raise ethical questions. The essay begins by discussing these questions, which touch on notions of mediation and debates about the morality of critical judgment of Holocaust texts. Then, the essay explores relevant aspects of Jackson's background and surveys the scholarship on the story. Next, the argument offers a reading of "The Lottery" as describing a death selection process that bears the hallmarks of imaginative writing about European anti-Semitism and the Holocaust. This analysis draws on anthropological theory from the period and refers to a little-known period text on similar themes to argue that "The Lottery" integrates the themes of patriarchal violence and anti-Semitic scapegoating. The fourth and final section describes the cultural climate of abstraction about the Shoah by discussing prominent views on it from the middle part of the 20th century (1940–1965) where these are marked by the influence of David Rousset's imaginative abstraction in his Holocaust memoir and then offers a brief introduction to and analysis of this little-known source. Discussion of Rousset offers support for the larger claim—namely, that a literary, abstract, and intersectional discourse on the Holocaust also produced "The Lottery", a story representing, from the victim's point of view, the modern-day scapegoating and death selection of a woman. In other words, the story should be seen as belonging to a particular moment in the history of discourse concerned with the Holocaust.

Analyzing Holocaust memoir and fiction thematically linked to the Holocaust has raised thorny ethical questions. Some, including George Steiner, have argued that analyzing Holocaust narrative or memoir is unethical and even heretical (Steiner [1966] 1998). Steiner has called for the suspension of critical judgment in the case of the genre, comparing Holocaust narrative to “the hallowed name of God” (p. 168). In the context of a critique of Jean-François Steiner’s *Treblinka*, a controversial fictionalized narrative of the uprising at that death camp, Steiner draws a line between the Shoah and the domain of art: “The aesthetic makes endurable” what should not be (Steiner [1966] 1998, p. 166). Others, such as Franklin (2011), Gordon (2000), and Langer (1991), have disagreed, observing the mediated qualities of all narrative, including survivors’ accounts. Franklin has pointed to recent scientific insights into the fallibility of memory and the mediating factors of editorial framing and publishing industry marketing on the construction of memoir as such. Langer has discussed the narrative and poetic conventions perceivable in oral testimony and memoir, where one sees a checklist of narrative art, namely, “chronology, description, characterization, dialogue, and above all, perhaps, the invention of a narrative voice”, in works by Viktor Frankl and Primo Levi (Langer 1991, p. 33). Robert Gordon has noted the parallels between Italian Holocaust memoir and neo-realist fiction, as well as the problematic ambiguity of the term “Holocaust literature”, which has been used to describe the memoirs of survivors as well as testimony, journalism, and fiction.

On the related subject of fiction about the Holocaust, scholars have been equally divided, but some, including Matthews (2013), Schwarz (1999), Berenbaum (1979), and even Steiner (Steiner [1966] 1998), an author of post-Holocaust fiction himself, have praised the particular capacity of fiction to represent the experiences of victims. Matthews, the author of a fictional work about the Holocaust, has surveyed this scholarship and observed that “[t]hose who argue for the necessity of a literature of the Holocaust believe that all writing is better than silence” (Matthews 2013, p. 53). According to Berenbaum, literature has the capacity to put a human face on the overwhelming scale of mass death, which “ceases to be anonymous”. Despite the inherent dangers of “falsification and mystification” that it poses, literature “is therapeutic, at points even restorative” (Berenbaum 1979, p. 76). Daniel Schwarz has written of the “imaginative energy” of fictional narrative that allows for a more complete understanding of the personal experiences of victims, in part because fiction enables the circumvention of corrupt official language (“final solution”) (Schwarz 1999, pp. 32–33).

Employing the logic used by Steiner in his critique of *Treblinka*, literature about the Shoah could be said to cross a moral threshold when it enhances the distance from the experiences of witnesses and victims rather than produces deeper insight. In this light, an abstract narrative only thematically linked to a genocide could be seen as aestheticizing mass death and thereby producing the distance that is the aesthetic’s vulnerability and hazard when an artist approaches the sacred experience of victims. Alternatively, Berenbaum’s notion of the aesthetic permits the view that a work of fiction defamiliarizing the Holocaust could paradoxically humanize the experience of the events by closing the temporal and geographical distances obscuring the lived experience of trauma. If familiarity can collapse distance, however, it stands to reason that it can also efface difference. In fact, other writing on the subject of the Shoah from the 1940s, some of which is discussed below, suggests the existence at the time of particularly hospitable terrain for experimentation with representations of the Shoah that minimized differences or sidestepped the topic of identity—Jewish or otherwise—in the search of transcendent meaning from the Shoah.

Commentators have tended not to read “The Lottery” in light of its specific historical context, in general, or in light of the Holocaust, in particular. Instead, critics have focused on ways that the themes of the story resonate with either Jackson’s personal experience of oppressive gender roles or the broad sweep of the history of masculine power and institutions (Oates 2016; Whittier 1991; Oehlschlaeger 1988). In recent years, few scholars have written about the story, an exception, in addition to Oates, being Eric Savoy (2017), who has contributed a Lacanian reading of the story’s subtle Gothic elements. Savoy’s focus on the Gothic is the one scholars have preferred when discussing Jackson’s other works (Haas 2015; Bonikowski 2013; Hattenhauer 2003). The other main topic that has

interested scholars when discussing Jackson's body of work is the domestic sphere (Shotwell 2013; Neuhaus 2009; Hague 2005).

Given these emphases on gender and the Gothic in the scholarship on Jackson, the Shoah may seem an unlikely reference point for an interpretation. In addition, the primary genres—horror and memoir—and overt subjects of Jackson's works may not suggest that themes or subjects related to the Holocaust were an abiding concern of Jackson's. Jackson's horror novel *The Haunting of Hill House* (1959), a Freudian ghost story, is widely considered a classic example of the genre. During her lifetime she was better known for domestic memoir (*Life Among the Savages* [1953] and *Raising Demons* [1956]), but Jackson's reputation presently rests largely on horror fictions such as *The Haunting of Hill House*, "The Lottery", "The Daemon Lover" (1949), and *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* (1962). Nonetheless, one can find in Jackson's biography and works evidence of interest in topics thematically linked to the Holocaust, including anti-Semitism. A friend of Jackson told her biographer Oppenheimer (1988) that Jackson intended "The Lottery" to touch on the theme of anti-Semitism. Oppenheimer writes:

She told Helen Feeley the story was based on anti-Semitism and grew out of her encounters with one particularly prejudiced shopkeeper; she told another friend that all the characters had come directly out of North Bennington [Vermont] and she proceeded to reel off their names. (Oppenheimer 1988, pp. 130–31)

Support for an interpretation along these lines also comes from a recollection of her husband, the *New Yorker* staff writer, author and Bennington College English professor Stanley Edgar Hyman, who was Jewish. He recalled Jackson's pride upon learning that the apartheid-era South African government had banned the story: "[T]hey at least understood" it (Franklin 2016, p. 245). In other words, despite the story's lack of overt references to ethnic or religious minorities or state persecution thereof, a government engaged in such persecution had intuited Jackson's intentions with her story.

Hyman's background and works provide illuminating, if circumstantial, support, as well. Franklin's biography of Jackson offers a detailed picture of how Hyman's political views and intellectual interests complicated as well as complemented Jackson's. He and Shirley were part of a social circle of writers and artists thanks to their time living in New York City, so they likely would have been conversant with current scholarly discussion of political events in Europe. Hyman's published works include *A Tangled Bank: Darwin, Marx, Fraser and Freud as Imaginative Writers* (1962), suggesting that he was also directly engaged with the ideas, historical events, and texts relevant to the history of anti-Semitic violence in Europe. In this work, Hyman grapples with the anti-Semitism of Marx that he expressed in correspondence (Franklin 2016).

Anti-Semitism is, furthermore, an under-acknowledged theme of Jackson's fiction. As Franklin (2016) notes, it is an overt subject of *A Road Through the Wall* (1948). The plot of this novel centers on the friendship between Harriett, a shy young poet, and Marilyn, a Jewish girl whom Harriett befriends. Instances of "polite" anti-Semitism directed at Marilyn culminate in Harriett's mother's demanding that she break off the relationship (Franklin 2016, p. 213). An unfinished novel by Jackson, *Soldier Leaving*, deals with the trauma of family separation due to World War II. In the draft, a newly married woman harbors anxiety about her Jewish husband, who will soon be leaving to fight in Europe (Franklin 2016). Another unpublished piece, "Henrietta", tells the story of a young refugee who experiences shellshock due to time spent in a concentration camp (Franklin 2016). The theme also appears in an early war-time story, "The Fable of Philip", which, as Franklin notes, Jackson wrote as a contest entry for *The Jewish Survey* (2016). Philip is an anti-Semitic student who attempts to launch a campaign against his Jewish peers and gets suspended from art school for vandalism directed at a Jewish professor. By the end, Philip has been reduced to working for a paint company (Franklin 2016).

Finally, anti-Semitism affected Jackson personally. She experienced prejudice when she began dating Hyman, whose Jewish ancestry was a source of conflict with her mother, Geraldine Bugbee, who opposed the marriage because of this (Franklin 2016). At Syracuse University, Jackson's alma mater, where segregation restricted Jewish students from joining some fraternities and sororities,

students criticized her for dating Hyman, and she wrote about this at the time in an essay (unpublished) (Franklin 2016). The strain on her relationship with her parents due to their disapproval of Hyman was such that she did not invite them to their wedding. As Franklin has also pointed out, “Shirley identified strongly with Stanley’s sense of himself as an outsider, an identification that would only deepen after they moved to the insular communities in New Hampshire and Vermont where they would later live” (Franklin 2016, p. 133). In the WASP enclave of Bennington, Vermont, Jackson and Hyman’s neighbors taunted them and vandalized their home with anti-Semitic graffiti (Oates 2016). Despite these many reasons to read “The Lottery” in light of its immediate historical context, mention of genocidal violence, anti-Semitism, scapegoating and the Shoah is notably absent from scholarship about the story.

2. Patriarchal Domination in “The Lottery”

Few scholars have focused on “The Lottery” in recent years, despite a renewal of interest in Jackson. An exception is Savoy (2017), who has compared and contrasted Jackson to Flannery O’Connor in terms of the Gothic. O’Connor’s fiction is said to draw on theological concepts to sketch an arc of failed redemption; Jackson on psychoanalytic concepts to stage a return of the repressed. Savoy claims that “The Lottery” is notable within US Gothic literature for its use of the pastoral and its avoidance of overt Gothic devices. Furthermore, the suffusion of the Gothic into the story’s atmosphere illustrates Jackson’s signature “affect”, meaning the “shock of plausibility” (and, as Saylor also notes, the shock of the Real) owing to the neutral voice and the “screen” produced through the shifting of emphasis away from the ostensible trauma to details and dialogue (Savoy 2017, p. 836). In this argument using Lacanian concepts, patriarchal power takes the form of the symbolic. Savoy has built upon a long tradition of reading Jackson’s works in terms of gendered power structures.

Oates (2016) has contributed to this particular critical tradition by suggesting that Jackson, who did not identify herself as a feminist, nonetheless drew on her own frustrations with the role of a housewife in creating Tessie, who is “so distracted by domestic tasks that she nearly misses the lottery”. Much of the criticism on “The Lottery” has similarly emphasized Tessie and the society’s choice of her as the scapegoat. For Oates, the subject of gender roles is of a piece with Jackson’s signature setting for her horror plots, the house, which reflects her own discomfort with the demands placed on her by four children and a demanding yet unfaithful husband. Oates contends that Jackson’s domestic “demons” stemmed equally from her strained relationship with her hypercritical, unloving mother. Combined, these forces inspired her surreal take on the gothic, with its many haunted houses and matricides.

Gayle Whittier has also identified an idiosyncratic representation of patriarchal power in Jackson’s writing. Whittier makes the counter-intuitive argument that “The Lottery” is not a feminist parable but a misogynist one, because the scapegoat, Tessie, is a figure for the “bad” woman of patriarchy (Whittier 1991, p. 358). Because the ritual rewards those who conform to expectations (like Mrs. Delacroix, who follows the rules without complaint and admonishes Tessie for resisting) and punishes one who does not—even making the reader complicit in the punishment by forcing her to imagine it—the story neither critiques nor even neutrally represents the operations of patriarchy; rather, it reinforces them. Tessie is a “classic scold” who also resists the female imperative of self-sacrifice, trying to make her married daughter, Eva, draw in the second round with the Hutchinsons (Whittier 1991, p. 358). While others face the prospect of death with dignity, Tessie complains about a lack of fair treatment. Hence, she abandons any question of morality for correctness, making it easy for Mrs. Delacroix to appear as a selfless and independent voice defending equality while actually erring and defending immorality. She misrepresents the lottery by telling Tessie, “All of us took the same chance” (Jackson 1948, p. 27). Whittier notes parallels with the 17th-century heretic Anne Hutchinson (1591–1643) but finds more resonance with the “New England witches”, similarly punished for failing to conform to expectations for obedient “marital property” (Whittier 1991, p. 361). For Whittier, even Jackson’s account of the story’s genesis has an antifeminist aspect, given that inspiration for it came to her while engaged in the kind of domestic labor to which Jackson once

unfavorably compared her writing (saying, “It’s great fun, and I love it. But it doesn’t tie any shoes” [qtd in (Whittier 1991, p. 362)]). If Jackson wrote it automatically as she claimed, then the context of its creation lends Jackson the innocence of children, “who commit myth and murder in a casual way” (Whittier 1991, p. 363).

A more conventional view is that the story paints Tessie as a sympathetic victim of patriarchal domination and exploitation. According to Fritz Oehlschlaeger (1988), for example, many details confirm the society’s organization under male authority and place the locus of resistance among the women in the story. A stoning victim saved by Jesus in the Book of John and Tess of *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* (1892), who is victimized by two men and ultimately killed at Stonehenge with the broader community’s support, are likely sources for Tessie. Another is Anne Hutchinson, whom, Oehlschlaeger argues, Cotton Mather and others associated with the threat of female sexuality, which explains why Nathaniel Hawthorne links her to Hester Prynne in *The Scarlet Letter* (1850). Oehlschlaeger supports the notion that Jackson was interested in the ways that patriarchal societies are threatened by and seek to control female sexuality by comparing the story to Jackson’s novel *The Road Through the Wall*, also published in 1948. The novel seems to invoke scapegoating in a way similar to “The Lottery”, but in the novel the scapegoating of a character named Hester Lucas is more clearly sexual in its motivation.

Oehlschlaeger mentions but does not fully address the fact that the scapegoating in *The Road Through the Wall* is multifaceted: not only are women targeted, but so are ethnic minorities, including a Jewish person and a Chinese person, in addition to a differently abled person. Rather than use this intersectionality to explore ways Jackson could have seen the desire to control female sexuality as one aspect of a system of oppression—a broader exercise of power—that targeted multiple vulnerable populations, Oehlschlaeger isolates the Hester character to support a feminist reading of Tessie’s situation in the story. While strongly suggesting that women’s oppression is of interest to Jackson in “The Lottery”, *The Road Through the Wall*’s constellation of persecuted identities also conveys an abiding interest in intersections among the targets of the modern ethnostate.

3. Themes of the Holocaust in “The Lottery”

By 1948, “scapegoat theory” (Fenichel 1940, p. 26) had become an influential tool used by academics to discuss anti-Semitism. Arnold Zweig, Otto Fenichel, Max Horkheimer, and Theodor Adorno used the theory in the 1930s and 1940s to analyze the spread of anti-Semitism in Germany. An article by Fenichel articulating the theory appeared in *Commentary* in 1946, where a note describes it as the first appearance in a non-academic venue of Fenichel’s “path-breaking study of the deep psychological mechanisms at the core of mass anti-Semitism”. The note goes on to observe the piece’s “wide influence on scientific thinking and research in the field” (Fenichel 1946, p. 36). The article is an edited version of one published in 1940 in *American Imago*, where Fenichel advances the view that the prevalence of anti-Semitism in Germany at the time was a “mass-psychological” phenomenon attributable to the effectiveness of state propaganda (Fenichel 1940, p. 25). This propaganda and the social dynamic it produced are comparable, Fenichel suggests, to the effects of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* fabricated by the Czarist police in Russia, which the authorities had designed in order to redirect revolutionary energies away from themselves, the party responsible for the widespread unhappiness, to a population that could not defend itself. As Zweig had observed in an article published in 1937, the German propaganda drew on a deep well of anti-Semitic sentiment traceable in Germany as far back as the 16th century during the German Peasants’ War, or *Bauernkrieg*, when authorities had similarly manufactured anti-Semitic animus. Paraphrasing Zweig’s analysis, Fenichel observes a link between submissiveness towards authority accomplished via education, on the one hand, and “mass-displeasure” with authority, on the other:

At that time, too, there was a ruling class which needed to deflect mass-displeasure directed against themselves then, too, apart from this mass-displeasure there was a mass-preparedness to submission, a change in the structure of the masses caused by education. Their conscience worried them when they dared to think of going against the authorities, and they were

therefore grateful if they could let out their rage without anything happening to their master, without his being angry, and against an opponent who dared not defend himself. (Fenichel 1940, p. 27)

In this integrative application of the anthropological concept of the scapegoat, anti-Semitism is theorized as the mass-displacement of social unrest by state power onto a defenseless population. Scapegoat theory as employed by Fenichel here and by others placed anti-Semitism in a sweeping historical and psychological process having specific manifestations in time but reflecting the theory's subordination of these manifestations to broadly general dynamics. As such, the theory represents another example of abstract theorizing at midcentury about anti-Semitic violence. In this case, theoretical analysis subordinates particular instances of violence to general forces and trends. In this particular case of such abstraction, the central mechanism is identical to the one invoked in "The Lottery". As I argue in the present section, the story invokes hallmarks of European anti-Semitism and discourse about it, including scapegoat theory, while implying that the violence it depicts is intersectional, targeting vulnerable populations including women and Jewish people.

Evidence of the influence of scapegoat theory can be found in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Horkheimer and Adorno [1947] 2002a), where Horkheimer and Adorno apply the concept of the scapegoat to anti-Semitism in Nazi Germany, but the unrest described as being misdirected at the Jewish population is said to be the product of capitalist modernity's general demand for conformity to a "drab existence" (Horkheimer and Adorno [1947] 2002a, p. 140). The authors cast modern anti-Semitism as free-floating aggression that only incidentally targets the Jewish population. Nor is it the result of intentional manipulation of the masses by authorities. (The *Dialectic of Enlightenment* was not widely read initially upon publication, and its influence was not broad in the 1940s (Horkheimer and Adorno [1969] 2002b). Nonetheless, its perspective on anti-Semitic violence, which I describe in more detail below, illustrates not only the use of the concept of scapegoating but also the high level of abstraction from the specific targeting of Jewish people that discussion of anti-Semitism could reach in the middle part of the century.)

A more directly relevant application of the theory can be seen in another source from the 1940s that uses scapegoat theory to describe anti-Semitism, but, in the spirit of "The Lottery", this document analyzes the phenomenon in light of the history of misogyny. Published in *The Hibbert Journal* in 1943, an article by Daisy L. Hobman entitled "New Witch-hunt" connects modern anti-Semitism to the oppression of women through witch trials. Due to its relative obscurity and parallels with "The Lottery", it merits a detailed description. Hobman argues that the persecution of women through this means, a phenomenon supported by the historical "fusion" of a number of myths into a coherent worldview, was a precursor to modern anti-Semitism (Hobman 1943, p. 77). These interconnected myths included a stereotype of the "bloated capitalist" connected in the public mind to Shylock; this figure offered a convenient target for the "working man" feeling the effects of the war economy (Hobman 1943, p. 77). The inverse also fed anti-Semitism, because the "thirsty bolshevik" stereotype played the same role for the "possessing classes", who were impacted by economic instability, or at least the threat of it, as well. Similarly motivated by fear to create a Jewish scapegoat were Fascist nation-states, who feared the loss of their still-new national unity and found a convenient target to blame in the figure of the "rootless cosmopolitan, who tries to stir up war between nations" (Hobman 1943, p. 78). The piece illustrates this attitude with a quote from a speech given by Adolf Hitler: "The flames in our towns and villages are increasingly hardened by the body of our people. They are no longer confused by sentiments of world brotherhood" (Hobman 1943, p. 78).

Envy in general has served as a wellspring of anti-Semitic sentiment, and Hitler's rhetoric mirrors the repression that led to witch trials (Hobman 1943). Quoting a scholar named Jones, Hobman writes that fear circulating within a sexually repressive culture has led sexually free or dissatisfied women to become targets of aggression. Likewise, in a time of rationing due to the war, shame about the common desire for restricted food items—a fascination with the Black Market rather than Black Magic, in Hobman's terms—has led to the scapegoating of Jewish people. Hobman writes: "The more the

desire for special privilege has to be suppressed, the deeper is the envy of those who, like witches of old, are supposed to have some secret power to gratify their lust. Where can this be focused most conveniently, where else but on the Jew?" (Hobman 1943, p. 79). In concluding, Hobman quotes Charles Péguy on the persistence of ancient social tension, or the "old bruise", to support the claim that the reappearance of anti-Semitism stems from a lack of "normal pleasures" in hard times. These being harder to come by, some seek "sadistic" pleasures (Hobman 1943, p. 80). The only difference between anti-Semitism and misogynistic violence, according to Hobman, is the risk to the persecutor in the time of the witch trials, when shared hysteria threatened all women, meaning that accusers could and did find their own loved ones charged as witches. An overarching sense of the whole piece by Hobman is a tension between barbarism and civilization, on the one hand, and appearance and reality, on the other. These contradictions recall the mid-century insight, famously expressed by Horkheimer and Adorno in terms of dialectic, into the tragic ironies of Germany's descent into Fascism and perpetration of genocide. In related fashion, Jackson's anonymous village in some ways resembles Theresienstadt (Terezin), the ghetto outside Prague where the Red Cross was infamously presented with happy, well-fed, well-educated children and the trappings of a normal small town (Green 1978).

In light of Hobman's essay, I argue in what follows that, like "New Witch-hunt", "The Lottery" represents an ethnostate's violence as intersectional: it links the oppression of women to anti-Semitism through scapegoating. Also, in keeping with Hobman's view of the history of scapegoating in developed societies, "The Lottery" connects misogynistic and patriarchal violence to anti-Semitic violence, while subordinating the latter to the systematic oppression of and violence against women. Within these broad parallels one can see in Jackson's text more direct and specific invocations of anti-Semitism and the Shoah and critical discourse on these topics. These include the story's depiction of the scapegoating of a socially and politically vulnerable population (in this case, women); the resistance to this by characters identified as Jewish; the complicity in this of a character marked as Christian; the selection for death of the undesirable through the workings of a seemingly arbitrary bureaucracy and an ultimately irrational and anachronistic process seemingly at odds with the community's values (and yet, paradoxically and tragically, not); the separation of families as part of the death selection process, which is the focus of the story since the murder itself takes place "off-stage"; and the pitting of neighbor against neighbor in the same through the exploitation of infighting and general social division.

As in Hobman, in "The Lottery", scapegoating most directly targets a woman, reflecting the patriarchal structure of the society and the rite. Specifically, the selection of Tessie is the product of an institutionalization of misogyny—the result of a seemingly random selection process that nonetheless happens to punish a misbehaving woman. Also, details of the administration of the rite support the view that Tessie is targeted. As Oehlschlaeger (1988) and Whittier (1991) have shown, the patriarchal structure of this world is clear. This is evident in the male control of the ritual, the priority given to the male townspeople within the ritual, the fact that married daughters must draw with their husbands' families, and the better odds afforded women with more children, due to the logistics of the two rounds of drawing. Tessie can be seen as an undesirable for multiple reasons. Oehlschlaeger has pointed out that she appears to be someone who has had relative difficulty having children, making her an "appropriate victim" for this patriarchal society to target and a logical winner, so to speak, given the design of the lottery, which stacks the odds against women with fewer children (Oehlschlaeger 1988, p. 264). Whittier has observed the ways she fails to conform to patriarchal expectations and, consequently, looks like the recipient of a punishment. Tessie arrives late, insults both the ritual and the labor that has kept her at home, and tries to send her own daughter to death in her place. Adding to this the fact that she is an older woman means one has many reasons to see her as a social outcast who also flouts her resistance to patriarchal imperatives for women (Whittier 1991, p. 358).

The lottery's resemblances to a witch-hunt simultaneously invoke the sadism of Nazi cruelty as described by survivors such as Rousset (1946). Sadistic cruelty appears in the intricacy of the process, for example, which is ultimately deceptive. Like ancient scapegoating, the selection process is mystical

rather than practical, but it has a veneer of sophistication. Despite being ostensibly outmoded (“over in the north village they’re talking of giving up the lottery” (Jackson 1948, p. 27)), the process is intricate and unnecessarily elaborate. The male heads of families draw lots first, which determines which family will draw in the second round. Then, within the selected family, as Whittier notes, “members . . . draw in inverse order of their chronological positions in the family hierarchy, except where age breaks down before gender and the wife draws before her husband, who becomes ‘first and last’ in the scheme” (Whittier 1991, p. 354). Mathematically this makes no actual difference for the men or women: within the selected family everyone’s odds are the same, regardless of when a member draws. Hence, the nature of the process and the manner of its unfolding are at odds; the latter is simply “bureaucratic” (or “ritualistic”). From one perspective, this makes the lottery appropriately magical, so Whittier can observe the ultimately irrelevant, and therefore symbolically meaningful, patriarchal sequence (“first and last”). From another perspective, this ritualism acts as a red herring. The sophistication masks a blunter violence and, at the same time, adds an element of manufactured suspense that serves no purpose—other than to put drama in the service of terror. Like violence in the Nazi death camps, a seemingly sophisticated process of death selection obscures a simpler and more inevitable one.

This makes the death selection process sadistic and theatrical with an overlay of bureaucratic excess—the stuff of the death camps as recalled by Rousset, who describes the Nazis’ brutalization of prisoners as unrelenting and indiscriminating violence superimposed with “*les décors de la civilisation montés comme des caricatures pour duper et asservir*” (“trappings of civilization set up as caricature to deceive and enslave” (Rousset 1946, p. 50; Guthrie 1982b, p. 60)). In Jackson’s hands, however, such totalitarian violence is dualistic (in this particular way) as well as dialectical, in a manner that echoes a common sentiment about the paradoxical character of progress in modernity as illustrated by Nazi Germany. In keeping with Horkheimer and Adorno’s (Horkheimer and Adorno [1947] 2002a) notion of the “dialectic of enlightenment”, barbaric violence lies behind both sophistication and innovation, and seeming mathematical complication obscures a brutal calculus. This speaks to a general tension between progress and traditionalism in the practice of the rite. The narrator observes ways that the lottery has evolved over the years, for example (“Because so much of the ritual had been forgotten or discarded, Mr. Summers had been successful in having slips of paper substituted for the chips of wood that had been used for generations” (Jackson 1948, p. 25)). A long paragraph focuses on details that the society has gradually eliminated from the practice over time, as if refining it and eliminating superfluities (“at one time, some people remembered, there had been a recital of some sort, performed by the official of the lottery, a perfunctory, tuneless chant that had been rattled off duly each year . . . There had been, also, a ritual salute” (Jackson 1948, p. 26). Most notably, voices in the broader society, including in the village, have begun to express resentment, but the practice has persisted (“‘They do say’, said Mr. Adams to Old Man Warner, who stood next to him, ‘that over in the north village they’re talking of giving up the lottery’”; Mrs. Adams echoes him: “Some places have already quit lotteries” (Jackson 1948, p. 27)). The names of these isolated resistors are significant: these “children of God” want the practice to end. In this society, “progress” has resulted in the elimination of “ritual” elements of the rite to focus on the death selection process central to it. Tellingly, a superfluity that remains, the drawing order within the family, serves no purpose other than to add horror to the personal experience of the selection process. This transformation of the ritual over time is granted detailed explanation in the story but has little relevance to readings that focus only on archaism and the rite’s invocation of a longstanding patriarchal social order.

What the evolution of the ritual reveals is that with ostensible social progress has come the refinement of the rite’s sadism and a more overt embrace of its brutality: “Although the villagers had forgotten the ritual and lost the original black box, they still remembered to use stones” (Jackson 1948, p. 28). Hence, the appearance of progress in the society is illusory: the society has become not more enlightened but rather more cynical in gradually stripping away the ritual’s cultural elements—the kinds of customs that reflect authentic belief in any ritual’s meaning—to expose a core of brutality with the mere trappings of civilization. The rite may seem out of place, given the modern setting and sense

of change referenced by Mr. Adams and lamented in turn by Old Man Warner (“Listening to the young folks, nothing’s good enough for *them*. Next thing you know, they’ll be wanting to go back to living in caves” (Jackson 1948, p. 27)), but these signs of progress are misleading. The selective forgetting of “barbaric”, or “ritualistic”, elements in a cynical embrace of brutality makes this progressive appearance akin to self-deception. The air of tired routine pervading the ritual betrays not the village’s enlightenment but its self-delusions: the people know that the lottery is “merely” a rite but conduct it anyway (“‘Well, now’, Mr. Summers said soberly, ‘guess we better get this started, get this over with, so’s we can go back to work’” (Jackson 1948, p. 26)). Significantly, as Warner’s complaint suggests, they continue the tradition not in the name of tradition but progress. In this way, “The Lottery” depicts enlightenment as self-deception in the service of barbarism. Enlightenment must be the operative concept because knowledge, time, and progress are the key stakes in the community’s self-understanding. For Warner, the young people are ignorant and, consequently, regressive; for Mr. Adams, knowledge of other communities’ practices offers support for an argument in favor of change.

This dialectic helps explain the many seemingly trivial details provided about the society. The regressive qualities of the lottery may overwhelm these aspects, making the broader culture seem more old-fashioned than the story actually describes it and the story less focused on the particularities of time and place than it is—hence, perhaps, the amenability of the story to feminist readings emphasizing the patriarchal institutions reflected in the rite. Although the lottery is old and traditional within the world of the story (no one can remember when it started, and the current black box, which is not the original box, is falling apart due to age), a key source of the piece’s disturbing power is the tension between the ritual and its modern setting. The first paragraph establishes the setting as a modern town square framed by a post office and a bank. Like state-organized anti-Semitism as described by scapegoat theorists, the process has been organized by a central bureaucracy (“in some towns there were so many people that the lottery took two days and had to be started on 26 June” (Jackson 1948, p. 25)). The children go to school (they have recently been let out for the summer recess). The townspeople own “tractors”, pay “taxes”, and organize “civic activities” such as “square dances, the teen-age club, the Halloween program” (Jackson 1948, p. 25). There is a “grocery”, as opposed to a general store or market (Jackson 1948, p. 26). Tellingly, the man who leads the ritual, Mr. Summers, “ran the coal business” (Jackson 1948, p. 25). The setting is not simply modernity; it is also, pointedly, industrial modernity. In addition, the detail about Summers creates a clear link to the Nazi genocide and death camps. Coal and the infrastructure of coal mining were central to the machinery of mass death in Nazi-occupied territories. Coal was the fuel for the crematoria at Auschwitz (Dwork and Van Pelt 2008). Inmates did forced labor in coal mines for private companies, generating in the case of Auschwitz prisoners alone around 30 million marks’ worth in profit (Rees 2005).

The rite’s superficial anachronism is one of the ironies that derive their power from the story’s historical context and suggest a broader, political significance invoking the Shoah—one irony in particular being the rise of National Socialism in Weimar Germany and the resulting corrosion and perversion of democratic institutions there. The story’s political “heresies” (Whittier 1991, p. 354) make the rite not only an act of masculine violence, as some critics have argued, but also an instance of social and institutional violence directed at a vulnerable population. Details such as the setting of the rite in the town square, where other “civic activities” are held, the inverted, parodic voting process in the form of the ballot box and slips of paper, and even the rendering of the town’s women as a kind of ancient chorus commenting on the process (as noted by Whittier 1991) all suggest an ironic political regression—ironic because the overtly pre-modern scapegoating ritual has co-existed with the development of democratic institutions in the society. In this “anachronism” emerge the outlines of a familiar observation about the growth of totalitarianism out of Weimar-period democracy in Germany (Weitz 2010). As Weitz has noted, social fragmentation was the “underside” of the Weimar Republic’s social progressivism, making German society vulnerable to “political and economic counterattacks” that “hollowed out” the democratic institutions (Weitz 2010, p. 582). Rather than anachronism, a term more consistent with Jackson’s other work that grasps this historical meaning is “return”.

Relevant to this historical parallel with the return of the repressed is the community's cynicism—its only half-hearted investment in the ritual. Although Tessie is a scapegoat, the townspeople make no show of animus against her and offer no reason for her selection; unlike scapegoats famously described by James Frazer in *The Golden Bough* (Frazer [1922] 1972), Tessie poses no false threat. Jackson, incidentally, had an interest in folklore going back to her high school years when she first read Frazer (Franklin 2016). The seeming randomness of the violence is key to seeing the theme of intersectional scapegoating in the ritual. The cynical randomness of the violence and lack of authentic investment of the community in the ritual abstract the targeting from specific vulnerable populations (whose identities are nonetheless clear from their names—those of the resisters Mr. and Mrs. Adams, that of Tessie) to a scapegoat acknowledged as such. On the one hand, this abstraction takes the meaning of the story to a plane of insight into collective human psychology and modernity—the plane of abstraction where Rousset, as I argue below, reflects on his experiences in the camps. On the other hand, the enlightened barbarism of the village resembles complicity. Collectively, the townspeople could rebel and end the ritual, but they do not. Compounding the egregiousness is the weakness of the lone, “round-faced” man in charge whom the villagers pity rather than fear (Jackson 1948, p. 25). Also, the lone voice defending the practice before it begins is that of an “old man”, Warner. On an individual level, the knowing complicity of the townspeople is still plainer. When Tessie resists, illustrating a loss of dignity in keeping with the events Rousset (1946) witnessed among his fellow prisoners, her neighbors respond with silence or support of the selection process:

“Be a good sport, Tessie,” Mrs. Delacroix called, and Mrs. Graves said, “All of us took the same chance.”

“Shut up, Tessie,” Bill Hutchinson said. (Jackson 1948, p. 27)

Delacroix and Graves have a personal interest in Tessie's being submissive at this point in the rite, the second round of drawing. Hence, the design of the lottery has effectively appealed to the self-interest of potential victims to promote infighting and direct aggression away from authority. Among the persecutors of Tessie is a character marked as a Christian (“Delacroix” means “of the cross” (Nebeker 1974)). In his articulation of scapegoat theory, Fenichel (1940) attributes the success of modern scapegoating to the fostering of submissiveness to authority by the state (for Fenichel, education is the means).

Aside from this parallel, the intersectional scapegoating in the lottery seems to resonate less perfectly with Fenichel and Zweig's systematic diagnosis of anti-Semitism as mass displacement than with the more abstract sociological perspective presented in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Horkheimer and Adorno [1947] 2002a). Unlike the mechanism discussed by Fenichel, the rite represented in “The Lottery” does not clearly manipulate and redirect existing social unrest. The only suggestion of an effort at social control is a folk saying voiced by Warner (“Lottery in June, corn be heavy soon” (Jackson 1948, p. 27)). The notion of authentic belief in such power of the ritual flies in the face of every indication of the villagers' motivations and feelings.

Rather than the product of displacement, the scapegoating here more clearly recalls the mechanism described by Horkheimer and Adorno (Horkheimer and Adorno [1947] 2002a), who describe anti-Semitism as an irrational phenomenon and a form of free-floating aggression lacking a stable object. Drawing on the history of the European pogroms, the authors describe anti-Semitism as a deeply-rooted “ritual” with a structural cause that reason, being implicated itself in the structure that has produced it, is helpless to understand (Horkheimer and Adorno [1947] 2002a, p. 140). Repeating the terms of their critique of the culture industry elsewhere in the text, the authors go on to cast anti-Semitic violence in terms of meaningless and thoughtless repetition:

Anti-Semitism is a well-rehearsed pattern, indeed, a ritual of civilization, and the pogroms are the true ritual murders. They demonstrate the impotence of what might have restrained them—reflection, meaning, ultimately truth. The mindless pastime of beating people to

death confirms the drab existence to which one merely conforms. (Horkheimer and Adorno [1947] 2002a, p. 140)

Although this analysis is informed by the larger argument's post-Marxist lens, the passage abstracts from the Shoah to a general indictment of humanity in modernity, going so far as to describe anti-Semitism as something akin to indiscriminate violence against no one group in particular, which incidentally also recalls Rousset's psychological analysis of Nazi violence in the camps. Horkheimer and Adorno write:

The blindness of anti-Semitism, its lack of intention, lends a degree of truth to the explanation of the movement as a release valve. Rage is vented on those who are both conspicuous and unprotected. And just as, depending on the constellation, the victims are interchangeable: vagrants, Jews, Protestants, Catholics, so each of them can replace the murderer, in the same blind lust for killing, as soon as he feels the power of representation. (Horkheimer and Adorno [1947] 2002a, p. 140)

In this view, anti-Semitism is roughly continuous with scapegoating rituals as described by Frazer in *The Golden Bough*—the expression of social rage without a stable object. Horkheimer and Adorno render anti-Semitism as not fundamentally different from the human scapegoats sacrificed by the aboriginal people of Onitsha on the Niger, for example, who bought victims “by subscription” to carry away the sins of the tribe (Frazer [1922] 1972, p. 660).

Such broad yet consistently abstract resonances as these suggestively point to an irony of intellectual history: in invoking Nazi atrocities while radically decontextualizing them, thereby transcending the Jewish genocide, “The Lottery” mirrors aspects of midcentury critical discourse on anti-Semitism. As David Rousset's memoir also reveals, such abstraction from the specific crimes committed against Jews and other minorities was not alien to first-person accounts of the camps.

4. David Rousset, the Shoah, and Identity

Although less well-known currently, Rousset has in the past exerted a degree of influence such that prominent commentators including Theodor Adorno and Hannah Arendt refer to his books. These particular writers draw on his accounts of Nazi camps either to challenge the utility of identity in responding to the Holocaust or to draw the conclusion that genocide in modernity exposes identity—religious or otherwise—as an illusion. Hence, attention to Rousset's work and influence can illuminate a thread of abstraction from the Jewish genocide in both imaginative Holocaust literature and mid-20th-century critical discourse about the Shoah influenced by such literature. Due to the relative obscurity of Rousset, the present section discusses his work in some detail and attempts to reveal his somewhat broad influence on academic and intellectual discourse about the Shoah during the 1940s and subsequently, the purpose being to demonstrate the fact and some specific ways that midcentury discourse on the Holocaust in some cases avoided the subject of Judeocide.

Rousset appears in *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, where Arendt (1964) infamously bemoans the stubborn persistence of anti-Semitic tropes in the prosecution (not the defense) of a Nazi war criminal. These tropes recurred, Arendt suggests, because a retrograde conception of identity—“the age-old and, unfortunately, religiously anchored dichotomy of Jews and Gentiles”—simultaneously persisted (Arendt 1964, p. 11). It may be unsurprising that the author of *On Revolution*, where Arendt critiques the persistence of religion in modern politics and models their future secularization on revolutionary America (Moyn 2008), would lament the influence of religious thinking on a war crimes trial. More notable is the fact that in making this point in *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Arendt relies on Rousset.

Arendt (1964) invokes Rousset while making an infamous claim about the alleged passivity of the Nazis' Jewish victims. The claim would prompt George Steiner, one among many others making similar critiques, to question Arendt's imagination, empathy, and motives:

[T]he riddle is not why the eastern European Jews failed to offer more resistance, why thrust out of humanity, deprived of all weapons, methodically starved, they did not revolt (in essence, Hannah Arendt's thesis suffers from a failure of imagining). In fact, this is a radically indecent question, asked as it so often is by people who remained silent during the massacre. (Steiner [1966] 1998, p. 167)

In *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Arendt (1964) faults a prosecutor for asking the “indecent” question but then takes it seriously herself. The discussion that ensues makes use of Rousset's narrative. Arendt relates how a prosecutor repeatedly asked witnesses variations on the same “stupid” question, “Why did you not protest?” (Arendt 1964, p. 11). For Arendt, this spurious line of questioning rests on an anti-Semitic trope. The real reason their victims did not rebel in large numbers, Arendt says, is that the Nazis excelled at the process of systemic enslavement. Quoting Rousset, Arendt describes the process as the use of torture to defeat the victim “before he mounts the scaffold” (Arendt 1964, p. 12). This victim can “be led to the noose without protesting” because he has already given up, “abandon[ing] himself to the point of ceasing to affirm his identity” (qtd in Arendt 1964, p. 12). Arendt attributes the Nazis' success at this to something akin to terrorism—specifically, the use of torture to send a message to would-be resisters. Arendt offers the example of the brutal arrest and torture—for months on end until their deaths—of 430 Dutch Jews who had participated in an assault on a German security contingent. “There exist many things considerably worse than death”, Arendt says, “and the S.S. saw to it that none of them was ever very far from their victims' minds and imagination” (Arendt 1964, p. 12). Ultimately, Arendt voices the concern that the Nazis' dehumanization of their victims through torture will be perpetuated through an ignorance of history. Rousset proves helpful to Arendt in arguing, on the one hand, that a focus on religious identity can lead to precisely this kind of ignorance and, on the other, in making the point that the exceptional cruelty of the Nazis reflected nothing exceptional about their Jewish victims. Finally, Arendt suggests that a certain emphasis on the identity of victims can lead to victim-blaming—hence her complaint about the “stupid” question lobbed at “witness after witness” by the prosecution (Arendt 1964, p. 11).

For Arendt, Rousset's account of the camps helps illuminate identity's double edge: in combination with ignorance, a focus on religious identity can dehumanize. For Adorno, who mentions Rousset in “Notes on Kafka” (Adorno [1953] 2003), concentration camp memoirs illustrate how the abstraction endemic in industrialized modernity renders identity superfluous. Comparing Kafka to Rousset, Adorno says that, along with accounts of the camps by Eugen Kogon and Bruno Bettelheim, Rousset's recollections were anticipated by “The Metamorphosis” and “The Penal Colony” (Adorno [1953] 2003, p. 221). These accounts validated Kafka's fiction, Adorno suggests, just as aerial photos of bombed-out cities validated Cubism by realizing the movement's fractured perspective on reality. Such is the power, Adorno says, of isolated moments in Kafka that disturb the surface of the monotony that he cultivated in his works and intended as a critique of industrial modernity's ceaseless abstraction. Ironically, this disruption is Kafka's own grand abstraction—his theme. For Adorno, such moments are key to an understanding of Kafka's work as a whole—namely, the theme of dehumanization vividly embodied by the insect. “The crucial moment”, Adorno says, “toward which everything in Kafka is directed is that in which men become aware that they are not themselves—that they themselves are things” (Adorno [1953] 2003, p. 222). In this view, Rousset's account of the camps illustrates humanity's general illusion about itself, collectively and individually. Such accounts verify the explosion of the myth of humanity as such, which Kafka had predicted. A casualty of this disillusionment is the realization that individuality—or individual difference—is as much of a myth as human difference. In other words, one comes away from Kafka's “memoranda” with an awareness of humans' “copylike similarity” (Adorno [1953] 2003, p. 222). Rousset helps lead Adorno to the conclusion that modernity has rendered identity, along with everything else allegedly distinctive about humanity, superfluous.

Rousset's perspective in *L'Univers concentrationnaire* (Rousset 1946) is worth attending to for another reason: Rousset's frame of reference effectively precludes discussion of Jewish prisoners

or the targeting and imprisonment of them by the German state. This fact may reflect Rousset's status as a political prisoner who spent time in what he terms "normal", as opposed to death, camps (Rousset 1946, p. 61). Rousset's work as an organizer for the French resistance had attracted the attention of the Gestapo, landing him in Buchenwald, Helmstedt, Neuengamme and, finally, Wöbbelin (Guthrie 1982a). After a period of convalescence following Wöbbelin's liberation in 1945, Rousset wrote a "prose poem" (Guthrie 1982a, p. 20) offering a firsthand, journalistic account of the prisoner's experience of the camps. It is also impressionistic and wry. As Guthrie (1982a) observes in the introduction to his English translation (*The Other Kingdom*), an influence was Alfred Jarry, whose character Ubu Roi is a thread running through the book. Episodic and even darkly comic in places, Rousset's account of life in the camps focuses on topics such as the daily routine of a quarantine unit, a power struggle among the prisoners who occupied mid-level leadership positions, and descriptions of individual prisoners, including the writer Benjamin Crémieux, whose mental breakdown is detailed. Rousset briefly discusses the role of the death camps in the attempted eradication of the Jewish people, but ethnic or religious identity of prisoners is not a focus, an exception being Jehovah's Witnesses.

Sections of the book devoted to describing the inmate populations reflect this restricted focus. For example, when Rousset offers a sketch of the history of the Nazi camps, he says that political prisoners (such as himself) and "common criminals" were the main targets for incarceration (Rousset 1946, p. 71). Political prisoners were the first targets and allowed the Nazis to refine their instruments and methods of torture: "*Les camps ont été faits pour les politiques allemands, précisément pour eux. Ce n'est qu'accessoirement que les camps se sont ouverts aux étrangers*" ("The camps were created for German political prisoners, specifically for them. It is only incidentally that they came to be opened to foreigners") (Rousset 1946, p. 61; Guthrie 1982b, p. 70). As the war progressed, the numbers of these prisoners naturally lessened, and they were displaced by the "*droit commun' allemands*" ("common criminals") (Rousset 1946, p. 61; Guthrie 1982b, p. 71):

Ils étaient pour les S. S. la lie de la société, une lie nauséabonde, des excréments, mais des excréments de la race des seigneurs et, à ce titre, ils étaient de droit, par hérédité, en quelque sorte, les maîtres de toutes les peuplades de l'Europe transmutées en concentrationnaires. (Rousset 1946, pp. 61–62)

The SS considered them as the dregs of society, excrement, but excrement of the Master Race and, as such, by a sort of birthright, rulers of all the other races of Europe transmuted into concentrationees. (Guthrie 1982b, p. 71)

These "criminals" who served the Nazi Schutzstaffel (SS) included prostitutes, procurers, smugglers, and illegal restaurateurs. Alongside these were "*non-sociaux, les inassimilables*" such as

Romanichels, vagabonds de toutes couleurs, réfractaires au travail obligatoire; le groupe des maladies, des tarés: toutes les dépravations sexuelles et les pédérastes connus sous le numéro qu'ils portaient: 175. Enfin, proches des politiques, les objecteurs de conscience, les hommes de la Bible. (Rousset 1946, p. 62)

[Roma], vagabonds of every hue, dodgers of the labor draft; the group of sick men and degenerates: every kind of sexual depravity with the homosexuals recognizable by the number 175 on their badges. Finally, nearest akin to the political prisoners, were the conscientious objectors, Jehovah's Witnesses. (Guthrie 1982b, p. 71)

The omission of Jewish prisoners from this inventory is notable. Considered alongside the logic employed in certain key passages, this omission illustrates why Rousset's account belonged to and supported a discourse of abstraction about the Holocaust that served to obscure the Jewish genocide. More specifically, the logic of Rousset's account derives general truths about humanity from his experiences and reconciles differences between populations imprisoned by the Nazis. For instance, when discussing the death camps, the narrative takes a broad perspective and seeks to connect the

experiences of prisoners at death camps and those at the “normal” ones. Describing the former, the text emphasizes the selection process and points to its deceptions and cruel ironies (“*les décors de la civilisation montés comme des caricatures pour duper et asservir*”; “trappings of civilization set up as caricature to deceive and enslave” (Rousset 1946, p. 50; Guthrie 1982b, p. 60)) and to the entrapment of the gas chamber workers in a hellish netherworld of “betrayal” where they are “*condamné à vivre toutes les seconds de son éternité avec les corps torturés et brûlés. La terreur brise si décisivement les nerfs que les agonies connaissent toutes les humiliations, toutes les trahisons*” (“condemned to live each second of its eternity with burned and tortured bodies. Terror breaks the nerves so effectually that their agony encompasses every humiliation and every betrayal”) (Rousset 1946, p. 50; Guthrie 1982b, p. 61). Rousset says that this world of mass death is different in degree, not kind, from the world of the prisoners at the “normal” camps like Buchenwald, where “*la pendaison lente*” (“slow executions”) take place each evening to be witnessed “in all their refinements” (“*raffinée*”), and a weekly roll call on Sundays identifies selected prisoners (nicknamed “*musulmans*” [“Moslems”]) for transportation to death camps (Rousset 1946, p. 51; Guthrie 1982b, pp. 61–62). At Neuengamme, prisoners have for a time been ordered to sing during executions, and at Helmstedt the executions take place in the barracks. Here, one perceives an effort to find common ground between the experiences of prisoners in the death camps and those of political prisoners like himself. Such passages render the Nazis’ brutality not simply as sadistic but indiscriminating. Hence, the tendency towards generalization and analogy employed in such passages is a feature of the style that effectively minimizes the targeting of Jewish people and other ethnic minorities for death. Within this perspective offering a synthesis of particular experiences across different camps and populations, the descriptions of daily life highlight the deceptiveness, randomness, and cruel playfulness of the violence. Jackson’s sadistic lottery recalls both the ironic tone and specific details of these descriptions (down to the “roll call” used to single out victims for transportation).

Just as Jackson’s characters participate in, rather than collectively resist, the ritual, the prisoners in Rousset’s narrative victimize one another. One representative passage illustrates how in Rousset’s text a universalizing pessimism is conjoined to this theme of complicity. In the passage, Rousset recalls how desperation made some prisoners act as spies for the SS:

Les espions des S. S. grouillaient dans nos rangs. A Helmstedt, un Russe et un Allemand pendaient les détenus, femmes ou hommes. On leur donnait chaque fois une soupe supplémentaire. Pour une soupe, pour un quignon de pain, combine de délateurs? La plus élémentaire prudence interdisait donc de parler de son activité passée. (Rousset 1946, p. 81)

Our ranks were riddled with SS spies. At Helmstedt, a Russian and a German hanged the prisoners, women or men. For each hanging they received an extra ration of soup. And how many stool pigeons could be bought for a can of soup or a hunk of bread! The most elementary caution therefore forbade a prisoner’s mentioning his past activities. (Guthrie 1982b, pp. 86–87)

At this point, Rousset relates an anecdote about the hanging of a woman who “*fut pendue pour avoir trop parlé de ses affaires*” (“talked too freely about her past”) (Rousset 1946, p. 82; Guthrie 1982b, p. 87) and about the wounds her fingernails left on the face of the hangman. In conclusion, he says, “*Les poteaux indicateurs plantés à la croisée des routes maintenant l’intimité des camps*” (“the informers posted at crossroads maintained privacy in the camps”) (Rousset 1946, p. 82).

From this view, the effectiveness of the Nazis’ brutality depended partly on their ability to prevent cooperation and undermine solidarity by exploiting the pasts and survival instincts of those they were torturing. As in Jackson’s story, the operation of the system depended on the existence of a patriarchal double standard. In this case, the double standard applies to sexuality. The Nazis’ strategy succeeded, Rousset suggests, because of the prisoners’ diverse representation of humanity, not in spite of it. This broadly pessimistic view locates evil in a specific exploitation of shared human weakness that encompasses and transcends ethnic differences while exploiting gender differences. The passage

also implies that this evil is neither unique to the Nazis nor animated specifically by any one group under their control.

One finds this universalizing pessimism also in a chapter entitled “*Les Ubuesques*”. In this chapter, the text credits a generic “criminal” element with a form of evil that pervades the entire “*l’univers concentrationnaire*”. Recalling “The Lottery”, this evil appears to be an abstract entity that manifests itself in violence and cruelty at all levels of the society. In Jackson’s story, Mr. Summers, who leads the ritual, does not have a monopoly on cruelty. Instead, the townspeople are complicit, and even Tessie Hutchinson, the scapegoat, behaves cruelly when she attempts to make her married daughter draw with the Hutchinson family. Similarly, in this universe, evil belongs to no particular class of inmate or warden, and this element, personified by monstrous “*hommes verts*” (“green men”), exercises a kind of “*souverainement*” (“sovereignty”) over the whole world, which includes but extends beyond even the SS (Rousset 1946, pp. 64–65; Guthrie 1982b, p. 74). The SS “*corrompent merveilleusement toutes les résistances et toutes les dignités*” (“miraculously corrupt all the resistance and all the dignity”), Rousset says (Rousset 1946, p. 64). The green men, by contrast, “*sont les grands maîtres de ces cérémonies*” (“are the grand masters of these ceremonies”) (Rousset 1946, p. 64; Guthrie 1982b, p. 73). They “*rendent impossibles et factices toutes les solidarités. Ils installent les forces et les ruses comme seuls rapports naturels entre les hommes*” (“render any kind of solidarity impossible and illusory. They set up force and fraud as the only natural relations between men”) (Rousset 1946, p. 65; Guthrie 1982b, p. 74). In this passage, Rousset abstracts the evil of the Holocaust from not only the camps but also the Germans who constructed them, addressing an evil that the structure built by the SS allowed to flourish. Self-interest and greed personified, the green men represent but also transcend the SS and their victims.

Perhaps such elements of narrative and imaginative representation in Rousset’s memoir and Holocaust literature like it, works that produce and invite broader contextualization of the experiences described, are less exceptional in the context of Holocaust literature than the received meanings of “witnessing” and “accounting” permit. In *Ecologies of Witnessing*, Pollin-Galay (2018) has explored ways that even Holocaust testimony can share features with forms of communication traditionally considered imaginative or creative and, furthermore, has observed inter-cultural variations among these features. These variations have led to conflict between interviewer and subject during the process of recording testimony, as illustrated in the case of a Lithuanian survivor whose recorded testimony reveals her resisting efforts by her interviewer to frame her experiences using certain narrative modes (Pollin-Galay 2018, p. 43). These cultural dimensions of testimony also reflect the socially embedded and shared nature of memory for Pollin-Gray, who draws on the ideas of Maurice Halbwachs along with more recent research from other fields on the social aspects of witnessing. From this perspective, all testimony is “collective”, even if scholars studying Holocaust narratives have tended not to take into account the “witness’s social ecology” (Pollin-Galay 2018, p. 7). Pollin-Galay’s comparative analysis of Holocaust testimonies leads to the conclusion that allegory, one example of abstract creative thought about the Holocaust, is not only common in testimony but also “the most prominent mode” employed by some survivors. Discussing the testimony of a survivor named Gita Taitz, Pollin-Galay writes,

The most prominent mode of testimony that emerges from the English-American ecology is *personal-allegorical*. That is, one important way that Gita Taitz draws truth from the events she has witnessed is through recreating personal experience in narrative . . . Her testimony is also openly allegorical in that she enables the distant listener to derive lessons from her memories, applicable anywhere. (Pollin-Galay 2018, p. 5, emphasis original)

Pollin-Galay also observes about Hebrew-language testimony that another mode is “communal-monumental”: it makes connections to a broader social context (“official communal activity”), presents a life-affirming view of trauma (“make[s] greatness out of suffering”), and seeks to derive from the trauma lessons for the future (Pollin-Galay 2018, p. 5).

Offering a contrast to this kind of narrative is testimony from an eastern-European cultural context, specifically, “the Yiddish-Lithuanian ecology”. Here, rather than finding “moral instruction

or programmatic planning”, Pollin-Galay observes a “collective-forensic” mode that focuses on the local “microcosm” to present a detailed record of a community (“a wide cast of characters”). Linked by place, occupation, and ethnic identity, this community is described in detail in order to make judgments (“[identify] local assailers in a forensic manner”) (Pollin-Galay 2018, pp. 5–6). Pollin-Galay’s comparative, inter-cultural analysis of Holocaust testimonies illustrates the difficulty, if not impossibility, of distinguishing between pure testimony and narrative convention.

A Holocaust memoir exemplifying the collective-forensic mode of testimony, while offering a contrast to Rousset’s memoir, is the published autobiographical prose of Tadeusz Borowski, a prisoner in the Auschwitz and Dachau camps between 1943 and 1945 (Borowski 1967). Unlike Rousset’s autobiographical account of Nazi camps, Borowski’s style of memoir is minimalist and realist and notably devoid of overt interpretation, historical contextualization, abstraction, or induction. A brief passage can illustrate the different manner and approach used by Borowski (1967):

We march fast, almost at a run. There are guards all around, young men with automatics. We pass camp II B, then some deserted barracks and a clump of unfamiliar green—apple and pear trees. We cross the circle of watchtowers and running, burst on to the highway. We have just arrived. Just a few more yards. There, surrounded by trees, is the ramp. (Borowski 1967, p. 33)

Borowski’s (1967) forensic approach to documenting his experiences involves paying attention to the experiences of Jewish prisoners. For example, Borowski offers granular detail in describing the methods used by the SS in carrying out the Nazis’ genocidal program against the Jewish people and, despite necessary limits due to the memoirist’s frame of reference, the experiences of Jewish people captured and imprisoned by the Nazis. Pollin-Galay (2018) work suggests that differences between the minimalist narrative style employed by Borowski and the abstract narrative style employed by Rousset (1946) may reflect broader divergences between the narrative modes produced by different social “ecologies”—in this case, eastern-European, on the one hand, and western-European, on the other. The differences also affirm that narrative and even memory itself are cultural practices.

5. Conclusions

Philosophical abstraction and literary devices—“cultural” aspects of autobiography—are incompatible with some conventional views of the Holocaust memoir genre. Nevertheless, Rousset’s *L’Univers concentrationnaire* (1946), a literary Holocaust memoir strongly marked by both yet notably muted on the subject of the Jewish genocide, exerted an influence on intellectual discourse about the Holocaust at midcentury. Concurrently, scholars were not, as a rule, studying the Jewish genocide (Spiegel 2012). Also at midcentury, scholarship analyzing European anti-Semitism using an anthropological theory reliant on historical and folkloric concepts—scapegoat theory—entered public discourse. At least one writer, Daisy Hobman (1943), merged the scapegoat theory of anti-Semitism with feminist critique, comparing anti-Semitism to witch-hunts. This cultural climate producing a literary, abstract, and intersectional discourse directly and indirectly focused on the Holocaust also produced “The Lottery” (1948), a story representing, from the victim’s point of view, the modern-day scapegoating and death selection of a woman. Among the other potential victims are likely figures for Jewish people (the Adamses), and one of the victim’s persecutors among the complicit townspeople is a character named Delacroix. Despite such reference points, parallel themes, and a conceptual framework shared with the broader discourse about anti-Semitism and the Holocaust, Jackson’s story has traditionally been read ahistorically as a horror tale about social regress with feminist (or anti-feminist) overtones. I have argued here that its historical context suggests that the story belongs to an intersectional analysis of state violence related, directly and indirectly, to the Holocaust and to Holocaust literature. Close comparative analysis of Jackson’s and Rousset’s texts offers tantalizing, if only suggestive, evidence of Rousset’s influence on Jackson. Circumstantial evidence of Jackson’s exposure to Rousset can also be cited. Stanley Edgar Hyman could have written the review of

Rousset's 1946 memoir that appeared in *The New Yorker*; he was a staff writer at the magazine and wrote other reviews at the time (Franklin 2016). Judging from Hyman's published works, the magazine's editors would likely have seen him as well qualified to review it. Such speculations are ultimately less significant than parallels between the story and the inductive and abstract discourse from midcentury on the Holocaust represented by Rousset and those his memoir influenced, including Arendt and Adorno.

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